

ENVIRONMENTAL WARRIORS



ANDREW RENNEISEN For The Times
RANGERS and Congolese troops are deployed at Garamba National Park’s Bagunda outpost. Under assault by poachers seeking to cash in on wildlife parts, the park has seen 21 attacks within a year.

ELEPHANT MEN

Garamba National Park in Congo is one of Africa’s most dangerous corners. Five rangers in a year lost their lives to protect pachyderms and giraffes.

By Robyn Dixon
REPORTING FROM GARAMBA NATIONAL PARK, CONGO

Kambale Mate huddled beneath a tangle of grass, looking up at bright stars in a moonless sky, a tumble of chaotic events cascading through his mind.
Where were the other wildlife rangers, Jean de Dieu Matongo and Joel Meriko Ari? Were they alive?
He had been a ranger for only five months at Garamba National Park, the last remaining preserve for disappearing populations of elephants and giraffes in this part of Africa. Yet here he was with two comrades, hiding like small, petrified mammals in the grass. If any of them moved, a large band of poachers nearby could find and kill them.
A hassock of grass cradled his back as he looked up. He couldn’t remember quite how he had escaped the shrieking storm of bullets. What he remembered was

the crunch of the crisp, dry leaves as boot steps crept through the dusk.
The world is experiencing an epidemic of environmental killings. Last year 200 environmental defenders — citizens protesting mining, agribusiness, oil and gas development and logging, as well as land rights activists and wildlife rangers — were killed, according to the London-based nonprofit Global Witness. In the first 11 months of this year, the number was 170.
The reasons are many: corruption; rising global demand for natural resources; companies’ growing willingness to exploit new areas; and a dearth of accountability, as governments and corporations increasingly work together on resource development agendas.
“We’ve seen impunity breeding more violence,” said Billy Kyte, a Global Witness official. “Those carrying out those attacks know they [See Congo, A6]

Congress OKs bill to avoid shutdown of government

But lawmakers fail to approve disaster aid for California and other states hit by fires and hurricanes.

By LISA MASCARO

WASHINGTON — Congress approved a temporary spending bill to prevent a government shutdown, but failed to complete work on an \$81-billion disaster aid package to help California, Gulf Coast states and Puerto Rico recover from wildfires and hurricanes, as lawmakers scrambled Thursday to wrap up business before a Christmas break.

The stopgap measure continues federal operations for a few more weeks, setting up another deadline for Jan. 19. But it left undone a long list of priorities that members of both parties had hoped to finish this year.
The House approved the spending bill, 231 to 188, with 14 Democrats joining a majority of the chamber’s Republicans. The Senate quickly followed, voting 66 to 32 to avert a federal shutdown Friday, with 30 Democrats opposed, including both California senators, largely because the bill failed to resolve the fate of the young immigrants known as Dreamers.
The disaster aid package, the largest in U.S. history, ran into trouble. It passed the House, 251 to 169, on a bipartisan vote, but was blocked in the Senate, where it required 60 votes, under pressure from two directions.
Conservative groups op-

posed the disaster measure for increasing spending too much, and Democrats said it was insufficient, especially for hard-hit Puerto Rico. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky decided not to bring the measure up for a vote.
Lawmakers plan to try again in the new year.
The stopgap spending bill would fund three more months of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, which provides insurance for nearly 9 million children nationwide. Congress has been deadlocked on a longer-term renewal of the popular program, and several states are on the verge of running out of mon-[See Congress, A9]

A U.N. REBUKE FOR U.S. ISRAEL POLICY

Defying Trump, 128-9 vote condemns his Jerusalem declaration.

By TRACY WILKINSON AND NOGA TARNOPOLSKY

WASHINGTON — In a sharp reproach to the Trump administration, the United Nations overwhelmingly voted Thursday for a resolution meant to condemn the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, ignoring President Trump’s last-minute threats to punish countries that voted against Washington’s position.
The General Assembly approved the resolution by a vote of 128 to 9, with 35 abstentions, in an emergency session. The resolution was nonbinding, but it was a powerful signal that the White House and Israel remain deeply isolated on an issue of global concern but one that is popular with Trump’s base.
The lopsided vote marked the latest sign of how the Trump administration has roiled world affairs, challenging international efforts to combat climate change, stem human rights abuses and ease the nuclear standoff with North Korea.
Diplomat after diplomat took the General Assembly podium to say that the status of Jerusalem had to be resolved in final peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians, not by fiat from Washington. No other nation, even the few that opposed the resolution, said it would follow the U.S. lead and move its embassy to Jerusalem.
[See U.N., A4]



LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times

Laker serves jail time, and still plays

Guard Kentavious Caldwell-Pope is serving a 25-day sentence after pleading guilty to a probation violation. He is allowed to leave the detention center for practices and games in California. **SPORTS, D1**
Dodgers raise ticket prices
Many season-ticket holders have received notice of increases for 2018, some up to 30% higher. **SPORTS, D1**
Weather: Sunny. L.A. Basin: 66/47. **B6**



IAN BOYLE The Nature Conservancy
THE COJO-JALAMA RANCHES encompass roughly 24,000 acres south of Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Saving a prized stretch of coast

Couple’s gift allows purchase of pristine Cojo-Jalama Ranches

By THOMAS CURWEN

A conservation group on Thursday purchased a sprawling stretch of undeveloped Santa Barbara County coastline — a prized acquisition made possible by a \$165-million gift from a couple who had long sought to protect the pristine ranchland from devel-

opment.
The nonprofit Nature Conservancy acquired the Cojo-Jalama Ranches, which comprise roughly 24,000 acres and eight miles of coastline south of Vandenberg Air Force Base, from a New England investment firm, said Michael Bell, director of the conservancy’s California ocean program. Valued as sacred by the

Chumash and operated for more than 100 years as a cattle ranch, the twin parcels straddling Point Conception are a time capsule of oak woodlands, coastal prairies and beaches whose breaks are revered by surfers.
“This is not just any place,” said Mike Sweeney, executive director of the Nature Conservancy in California. “It’s ridiculously beauti-

ful out there. It’s not a big property, just an exquisitely placed property.”
Jutting out from the coast, Point Conception — sometimes referred to as the “elbow of California” — is a point of demarcation between the state’s distinct southern and northern ecosystems, a place where the cold Pacific current [See Coast, A11]

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